

Transportation Conformity Working Group

Interagency Consultation

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, July 26, 2005
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Southern California Association of Governments
818 W 7th Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Riverside 'A' Conference Room

The Transportation Conformity Working Group (TCWG) held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 26, 2005 at SCAG's downtown offices. The following minutes are intended to summarize the matters discussed. An audio recording of the entire meeting is available for review at SCAG's office.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at about 10:07 AM by Ted Harris, Association Regional Planner, SCAG Staff.

2.0 WELCOME AND SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE:

In Person: Joe Alcock, SCAG
Augustus Ajawara, RTA
Naresh Amatya, SCAG
Rosemary Ayala, SCAG
Grace Balmir, FHWA/FTA
Jennifer Brost, SCAG
Meenu Chandan, Caltrans
Herman Cheng, MTA
Jose Gutierrez, City of L.A., EAD
Ted Harris, SCAG
Kathryn Higgins, SCAQMD
Ben Ku, MTA
Philip Law, SCAG
Betty Mann, SCAG
Nancy Marroqum, MTA
Jean Mazur, FHWA
Shirley Medina, RCTC
Laleh Modrek, Caltrans
Sylvia Patsaouras, SCAG
Eyvonne Sells, AQMD
Arnie Sherwood, ITS/UCB
Paul Taylor, OCTA
Teresa Wang, SCAG
Carla Walecka, TCA
Leann Williams, Caltrans
Andy Woods, Caltrans District
Sean Yeung, Caltrans

Via Teleconference:

Jennifer Bergener, OCTA
Mike Brady, Caltrans Headquarter
Ben Cacatian, Ventura County
Matt Dessert, Imperial County APCD
Paul Fagan, Caltrans District 8
Sandy Johnson, Caltrans District 11

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments at this meeting.

4.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

There was no report at this time.

5.0 ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Approval of the April 26, 2005 Meeting Summary

It was noted that on 6.4, Toby Tiktinsky's last name was spelled incorrectly.

Additionally, it was pointed out that item 6.3, last paragraph, third sentence needed to be corrected and read – If you do a TIP amendment and do conformity on it, the projects also included in the RTP. On item 6.5 the subject title should be corrected to read 2007 AQMP Update and corrected throughout the summary. The second paragraph needs to be corrected to reflect that the final hearing will be by the AQMD Governing Board in February of 2007.

Motion was made to approve the minutes and unanimously approved.

6.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1 RTIP Update (Rosemary Ayala, SCAG)

Rosemary Ayala, SCAG, presented an update on the RTIP, reporting that currently the major focus of the RTIP staff is the development of the 2006 RTIP guidelines. This is what SCAG provides to the Commissions and Imperial County for their Federal TIP submittals for the 2006 Federal TIP. Staff is currently tabbing the document by putting everything in sections, i.e. all policy and requirements in one section, conformity, clarification of TCM processes, etc. FHWA is providing appropriate language and process for the NEPA approval. Staff has the working draft schedule, which the County TIP's will be due to SCAG in mid-December.

An amendment is due from the County Transportation Commissions and Imperial County on Thursday, July 28. Amendment #9 is pending State and Federal approval.

Given the delay of the STIP, the adoption of the fund estimate will be delayed until October and there will be an associated two-month delay for the RTIP's to the State. Because of this delay, CTC approval is anticipated for June 2006.

Grace Balmir, FTA/FHWA, commented that she hoped this document would help the different county commissioner's and the local entities understand what needs to be included in the RTIP. Because this year we have been averaging one TIP amendment every month, and

they are large amendments. She would like to see that the projects that are going to move forward are included in the TIP and that we do not wait until the last minute to amend them to put them in the document. Ms. Ayala responded that this was correct that we have had an amendment almost every month and that is why staff is reverting back to quarterly amendments. This year we did not know what the State budget was going to bring and whether there would be a potential lock down. Consequently, the Region was trying to make changes it needed, and that is why we did not hold to a quarterly amendment process.

6.2 RTP Update (Naresh Amatya, SCAG)

Naresh Amatya, SCAG, presented an update on the 2007 RTP. Mr. Amatya stated that a key question on some of the committee's members minds is are we still on a compressed schedule, or a regular tri-annual scheduled. Although a final decision has not been made at this point staff is working towards the tri-annual schedule. The initial reasons for considering an earlier update are resolving in a way that may not require a compressed schedule. Staying on the tri-annual schedule will be a challenge in itself from this point on given a number of issues that have to be worked through. There are many things happening in the Goods Movement and Corridor studies arena. In the Corridor studies we are coming to a conclusion on I-710 corridor study and work on I-15 work is continuing. In the area of Goods Movement, the Statewide Initiative needs to be integrated into the RTP update is a big challenge. Staff is developing a more detailed work plan to accomplish what needs to be done. Staff is reviewing the baseline growth and revenue forecast, and some of the other key planning assumptions.

SCAG is refining the model for the next plan update. Additionally, over the next few months, staff is going to be reviewing the inventory of projects and getting feedback from all the stakeholders to make sure that our inventory of projects, which is going to be the basis for developing alternatives, is updated with the most current information.

Staff is close to the point of getting a consultant team onboard to assist us with the update process. The team, System Metics Group, is the consultant's that helped us update our last RTP. In the next update there are several challenges that need to be resolved, primarily in the Goods Movement and Finance Area.

Plans are expected to be collected from all the Counties in February or March of next year. The model validation is going to be ready around December or January time frame, and a lot of the analytical work will not be able to be done before that time.

6.3 Centerline Update (Paul Taylor, OCTA)

Ted Harris, SCAG, introduced Paul Taylor of OCTA and reviewed the TCMs process in the South Coast. Mr. Harris mentioned that if it turns out there is a need for a replacement, the process would likely be a similar to the previous scope change for the Centerline project. The first step is to evaluate alternatives to see if other projects in Orange County would give the same emission reductions, in the same air basin, completed by the same completion date. OCTA would come forward with this information to the TCWG. We will then discuss it through interagency consultation and evaluate the information presented. Once it meets all the criteria mentioned, then it will come back as a formal RTIP amendment and, if needed, an RTP amendment, although an RTP amendment would be less preferable.

Paul Taylor, OCTA, reported that federal funding has not been forthcoming as anticipated in the RTIP and RTP and is delayed to the point of compromising the delivery schedule of this project by 2010. Consequently, OCTA is taking proactive measures to study all replacement projects for the Centerline to give our OCTA's Board of Directors the ability to decide what they want to do. OCTA staff can then give the Board projects that can be delivered on time with funds OCTA can control. However, until the Board acts to terminate the Centerline

project and requests the process to amend a replacement into to the RTIP, Centerline remains a part of the RTP and RTIP.

The Board has considered thirty-four options after pausing CenterLine in February 2005. The thirty-four options analyzed, include: current project, other light rail transit, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, gateways to regional connections, other transit projects, and road projects. OCTA's Transit Planning and Operations Committee has had six work sessions since February of this year. All options were evaluated with focus on six 'sample packages' with emphasis on: costs, benefits, feasibility by 2010 and percent of contribution to emissions reduction with the current project defined as 100%. The considerations that are being used in evaluating the options are: readiness and the opening date, efficient use of resources, potential funding, Measure M considerations, transportation benefits, and regional issues. The Board itself has had two discussions on the options and it is expected that they will be making decisions on which of these options they'd like to pursue in the next two months. Once this comes about, the Air District and EPA will become involved in this process.

6.4 2007 AQMP Update (Kathryn Higgins, SCAQMD)

Kathryn Higgins, SCAQMD, stated that the planning staff is still in the process of finalizing the baseline emissions inventories. As soon as ARB finalizes the revisions to EMFAC 2005, we can get underway with the AQMP process. The draft is expected to be released next summer and the final in February 2007.

6.5 Interim Guidance on Fiscal Constraint (Jean Mazur, FHWA)

Jean Mazur, FHWA, gave a briefing on the FHWA's new financial constraint guidance, which was released at the end of June. We are currently working on preparing a letter to Caltrans and copying the MPO's about what we believe the effects of this guidance is going to have in California. Additionally, we have arranged with Caltrans to talk about the guidance at the next CFPG meeting. A task force is being set up to address some of the financial constraint guidance.

The guidance consists of the statutory and regulatory references, it includes some financial constraint definitions, there is a series of frequently asked questions and there are some sample worksheets. In general it is consistent with practices in California. For example FHWA and FTA cannot act on new amended TIP's and STIP's or plans unless they reflect changed revenue situations. For plans that are based on outdated or invalid costs estimates for projects or operations and maintenance, FHWA cannot approve amendments or new TIPs or RTPs. Document financial forecast approaches, assumptions, and results in TIPs and RTPs.

There are three areas that we think we need to improve upon in California: 1) properly reflecting advanced construction and their conversion to federal aid funding in TIPs and STIPs, 2) a better reflection of operating and maintenance costs, and to be, 3) cost estimates for projects and how over time those cost change and how it is reflected in the planning process as the costs change. We anticipate these improvements would be made over time with the next FSTIP.

Reauthorization Update (Jean Mazur, FHWA)

There was nothing to report at this time.

6.7 PM 2.5 Guidance (Dave Jesson, EPA)

Jean Mazur, FHWA, reported that it was her understanding that the guidance was currently going through the official EPA signature chain.

6.8 PM 2.5 Conformity Process (Ted Harris, SCAG)

Ted Harris, SCAG, stated that staff expected that the PM 2.5 Conformity process would be similar to the 8-HR Ozone process that we went through last year. We need to have a Conformity termination by April 5, 2006 to avoid a conformity lapse. We expect to come back to this group with a memo for the proposed process next month, and then take it to the Energy and Environment Committee. There is training on September 15 in Sacramento. Corrections will be made as needed based on the training. We hope to get an approval by the Regional Council for the authored resolution in February 2006, and then send it to FHWA to review and approve.

6.9 Information Sharing (Group Discussion)

Ted Harris, SCAG, announced that Mike Ganor, SCAG's TCM contact was no longer with the agency. Mr. Harris requested that all e-mails regarding TCM lists be sent directly to him, harrist@scag.ca.gov.

Jean Mazur, FHWA, stated that she wished to emphasize that the PM 2.5, Annual and Daily Standards, Guidance addressed how to do the emissions inventory and conformity for the annual standard. She also said that Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley are the only regions in California that violate the PM 2.5 standards.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:37 Noon. The next meeting of the TCWG will be Tuesday, August 23, 2005 at the SCAG offices.